Alberta
FIRE NEWS
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Building a stronger safety system

Emergency Management Alberta Agency

As first responders to most emergencies and disasters, firefighters play a critical role in keeping people safe. This critical role will be even stronger, now that the Government of Alberta has announced the formation of the new Emergency Management Alberta Agency.

The new agency combines the strengths of Alberta's existing emergency management framework with those of the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO). Making the FCO a pillar of the new agency will result in better co-ordination, preparation for, response to and recovery from a wider array of disasters and emergencies. It will also ensure a proactive, provincial response on an all-hazards basis, as well as closer co-ordination of training, support and public education.

"The agency is an important step forward for the future of emergency management in Alberta," said Rob Renner, Minister of Municipal Affairs, the department responsible for emergency management for the province. "Adding the fire service into the mix only makes us stronger, and better prepared to deal with the unexpected."

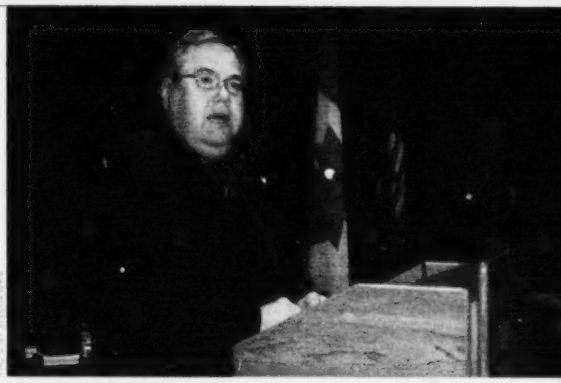
The agency will continue to work with municipal, fire service, association and industry partners. The relationships built by the FCO with these partners pave the way for increased co-operation and sharing of information, tools and best practices. The FCO head office will remain in Commerce Place in Edmonton.

"This will strengthen the recognition that the fire service is a key part of any emergency response," said Acting Fire Commissioner Spence Sample. "By working more closely with emergency management professionals, we'll be able to increase the levels of protection and service we provide to Albertans."

Combining the skills of Alberta's fire and emergency management professionals is an excellent opportunity to put the province at the forefront of emergency preparedness, including mitigation and recovery. Using the high level of technology, training and experience available from both professions will see municipalities of all sizes better equipped to deal with emergencies and disasters.

"I am very pleased with the announcement as it not only provides both the agency and FCO improved influence on emergency issues within the provincial government, but it also reinforces recent efforts to enhance our close working relationship," said Rick Brown, Acting Executive Director of the new agency. "The fire service community has a large influence in resolving emergencies at the municipal level and the agency appreciates every opportunity to work closely with municipalities through the FCO."

The details of the agency, including the announcement of the new executive director, are currently being finalized. Watch for more information in the next issue of *Alberta Fire News*.



Municipal Affairs Minister Rob Renner speaks at the Oct. 23 presentation of the Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal. More than 100 fire service members joined Renner and Lieutenant Governor Norman Kwong for the presentation at the Royal Alberta Museum.

The Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office wishes you and your family a safe and happy holiday season.

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Alberta

Strategic planning underway

Fall 2006 was an interesting time at the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO). One of our key initiatives was conducting a functional review of our entire organization and the work that we do to develop a clearer understanding of our core businesses to help create a strategic plan to address them. The outcomes of the review will contain plans for improved resourcing, staffing recommendations and closer linkages to stakeholders and the Government of Alberta business plan. The future of the FCO is being guided by its staff and their intimate knowledge of the needs of municipalities, fire services and others who have come to depend on us.

OH&S

The much anticipated Occupational Health and Safety policies and documents are now on the FCO's website. You will find a separate page on the site dedicated to Health and Safety issues. Check back frequently as this page will be changing often. We have already posted a template for a Level of Service policy, with much more to follow. All of the documents that you find on the site are being closely evaluated before we publish them to ensure accuracy and compliance with applicable legislation.

SOG templates

The FCO is currently finalizing templates for the structure of Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG). We are collecting these from a variety of sources and are putting them up on the FCO website to assist you. As always, make sure you modify them to meet the needs of your organization. We are also developing a handbook, based on a manual from the United States Fire Administration, to give detailed information on developing effective operating guidelines, including samples and, more importantly, lists of SOGs that you should consider. This will be available on our website in late 2006.

New clan lab handbook/DVD

The latest version of the Clandestine Lab Handbook is now available on the FCO website. It contains the most up-to-date information available for first responders. Also, after sharing the original version of the handbook with the Province of Quebec, they kindly translated it, enabling us to post a French language version on the website to assist Francophone residents of Alberta.

The FCO is also working closely with the British Columbia Fire Commissioner's Office and with the Alberta Solicitor General's Office to develop a DVD to assist the first response community, fire, EMS and police in identifying potential clandestine lab sites and to provide guidance on how to deal with meth-affected people. The DVD is expected to be ready early in 2007 and will be made available free of charge to all fire, EMS and police agencies in Alberta.

A new direction for the Alberta Fire News

Starting in 2007, *Alberta Fire News* will be published four times a year. This will allows us to bring you more up-to date content on a wider range of issues and topics affecting the fire service and the public safety system in Alberta. Watch for future Fire News issues in February, May, August and November

Fire Services Advisory Committee update

Taking the message to municipalities

In an effort to keep local government representatives informed of progress on the development of a unifying fire service framework, members of the Fire Services Advisory Committee (FSAC) staffed a booth at the AUMA Trade Show the first week of October 2006. The opportunity to greet many of the representatives that stopped by for information reinforced the importance of municipal trade shows as one way of reaching local government representatives.

The four FSAC Standing Committees have begun committee meetings to finalize their member list and fine tune the strategic plan. Part of the strategic plan will be determining exactly what expertise will be required and to form as many smaller sub-committees as deemed necessary. It is anticipated that the Standing Committees will require approximately one year to collect the information required and prepare the benefits and impacts of their recommendations.

Stakeholder consultation will also take place throughout the year. During this time, the main FSAC committee will serve as a steering body to which the standing committees will make their recommendations. FSAC will consider the recommendations and present them to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Updates about FSAC activities will continue to be provided through *Alberta Fire News* and the FSAC website at www.fsacalberta.ca.

Creating innovative solutions to retention and resource concerns

2008-03244/

Two of the most common concerns among fire service personnel in Alberta (and beyond!) are firefighter retention and resource allocation. Alberta's booming economy and a shortage of personnel in all occupations only adds to the problem. However, some communities are finding innovative solutions to address these concerns.

Sturgeon County Emergency Services (SCES) encompasses five towns and two hamlet rural fire stations located within 2,359 square kilometres. With only two full time staff, this may seem like a lot to cover, but thanks to co-operation, partnership and innovative approaches, the emergency service needs of this area are well under control.

Members of the Sturgeoun County Emergency Services putting out a blaze.

The rural areas surrounding the communities of Bon Accord, Legal, Gibbons, Morinville, Redwater, Namao and Calahoo come under the jurisdiction of Sturgeon County Emergency Services, and are represented by about 200 volunteer firefighters. Considering a turnover rate of approximately 25-40 per cent each year, training is a critical issue. Adding to that is the industrial growth in the county, especially with the recent announcement of the construction of three upgraders, which will have a tremendous impact on this area located north of Edmonton.

Recognizing these issues, Fire Chief Bart Clark focuses on four key areas – training, partnership, co-operation and resource sharing.

Training

"I believe that well trained firefighters have more desire to continue their involvement with the fire service, so we place considerable emphasis on providing top notch training for our members," said Clark. "The addition of Trevor Mistal, Deputy Fire Chief, has been a tremendous help. Through him, we have been able to increase training opportunities for our firefighters and continue to seek additional sources of training." While Clarke admits that he runs the risk of losing some of his members to full time fire departments, he also acknowledges that even when this happens, the firefighters are still available in their communities during non-working hours.

SCES has also specialized some of its training in strategic locations within the county.

"It's impossible for each community to be able to do everything," noted Clark. "Therefore, we determined which locations would best benefit from specific resources.

"For example, extrication rescue training and resources have been highlighted in five locations – Redwater, Gibbons, Bon Accord, Namao and Morinville. This provides for rescue capability at a high level in these areas, but also enables response in other nearby communities if needed. As well, a high level of wildland fire suppression is provided by firefighters in Calahoo, Namao and Redwater, who are equipped with specialized wildland fire protection."

Partnership

SCES has also capitalized on training resources through partnerships with other organizations, such as Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD). "Working with SRD has been a very valuable resource for us, especially in terms of providing firefighter training to learn more about wildland fires," Clark said. "In exchange, we've shared information about structural fires and share our equipment with them."

Clark also pointed out that through involvement with SRD, all SCES members are now using the Fire Smart program. Through Fire Smart brochure handouts, open house visits and information on the website, more and more residents are taking the necessary steps to help prevent fires around their property.

SCES is also part of the North Central Regional Partnership Group and is a member of the Northeast Region Community Awareness and Emergency

Continued on next page >>

Response (NRCAER). "Being part of these groups enables us to know what's going on beyond our own boundaries. In addition to providing mutual aid, we also often share training opportunities and resources," Clark added.

Co-operation

Another key factor is the high level of co-operation within and beyond the county. Clark acknowledges the tremendous support of politicians and county staff as well as members of the various fire departments within the county. "We are so fortunate to have a great number of very dedicated firefighters who have worked hard over the years to get councillors to listen to them. As a result, we continually receive solid support and encouragement for our efforts," said Clark. "Having no governance issues is a huge help in our ability to move forward and successfully obtain and allocate resources."

Resource sharing

Clark also commented that they carefully look at exactly what resources are needed for each of the five communities. "Essentially, we evaluate what's needed within a given community. By sharing equipment, making joint purchases and negotiating relationships with municipalities, we are able to obtain significant savings. For example, when a ladder truck is needed, we are able to use the one owned by the Town of Morinville."

Similarly, when applying for grants for firefighter training, the submission includes the training needs of all firefighters in the county. Additionally, SCES works closely with each of the towns to make sure their training efforts are complementary with what's being offered through Emergency Services.

Another key factor is the fire cadet program at Redwater High School. "The program is working out really well," noted Clark. "Getting people involved at an early age gets them interested in the fire service. In addition to having their hours of service, we also see them as our future firefighters. No matter where they end up working, we usually get them for weekend duty." Clark strongly encourages every fire department that has a high school in their jurisdiction to consider establishing a fire cadet program.

Due to limited resources for both firefighters and teachers, the public education component of fire safety has diminished over the years, stated Clark. "However, with the new resource materials available from the Fire Commissioner's Office, we are striving to regain a foothold on educational initiatives. The most recent Getting To Know Fire material is really great, and helps to capture the attention of children." Clark also mentioned that the templates and other materials being created through the FCO are quite useful. "Anything that makes it easier for volunteer firefighters to complete paperwork or other aspects of the job is much appreciated."

Clark summarized his county's efforts to manage in today's hectic and competitive world. "Sharing ideas, resources and training just makes good sense. Fire departments everywhere are going through the same kinds of issues. We just need to work smarter and work together."

New Editorial Board member

Bringing a strong insurance perspective

David Clarke is the newest member of the *Alberta Fire News* Editorial Board and his wealth of insurance experience will be valuable to future issues. Clarke currently serves as Director of Insurance & Risk Services with the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties/Jubilee Insurance Agencies. He oversees a province-wide insurance and risk management service for Alberta's counties and municipal districts and approximately 1,800 other non-profit entities.

David Clarke

After serving as a Senior Business Analyst with Dun & Bradstreet Corporation for eight years, Clarke moved into a career in the insurance industry that spans a multitude of disciplines including finance, municipal/public entity self insurance programs, reciprocals, brokerage and agency management, loss control strategy planning, municipal risk management training and global insurance market exposure. Clarke's most recent tenure was as Vice President/Risk Solutions Division of Willis Canada Inc., an international risk management and insurance brokerage firm. During this time, he was also engaged as Senior Account Advisor to numerous municipal and government organizations within Alberta and other Canadian jurisdictions, and dealt extensively with property and casualty loss control initiatives, including mutual aid agreements and emergency service delivery.

Fire Code and fireworks

On July 31, 2006, the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) wrote to Municipal Affairs Minister Rob Renner to request that low hazard fireworks be banned in Alberta. In his reply on August 28, 2006, Minister Renner stated he is sensitive to the safety issues the Association has identified, but that banning low hazard fireworks in the manner suggested would represent a significant policy change that would impact a wide range of stakeholders. Minister Renner added that, because of the number of complex issues involved, including many around the administration of the Alberta Fire Code and the roles and responsibilities of municipalities, additional research and a public consultation with Albertans will be required before any action can be taken.

Under the new edition of the Alberta Fire Code, which is expected sometime in early 2007, the use of low hazard fireworks would continue to be legal as long as it is permitted by municipal bylaws and a permit is obtained from the local fire department by the seller and user.

An initial survey of other regulatory frameworks by Alberta Municipal Affairs staff indicates that, in addition to questions about the safety and appropriate use of fireworks, there are also competing visions between provincial governments and municipalities as to who has responsibility for managing fireworks.

Further research will be completed as soon as possible, and the AFCA will be contacted when a consultation plan is developed. The AFCA has requested that a STANDATA on fireworks regulations in the 2006 Alberta Fire Code be developed to assist municipalities with developing bylaws and standard operating guidelines for fire departments to follow.

...banning low hazard fireworks in the manner suggested would represent a significant policy change that would impact a wide range of stakeholders.

Mark your calendar now for the 2007 AFCA conference!

Planning is already underway for the 2007 AFCA conference, which takes place June 10-13, 2007 at the Mayfield Inn in Edmonton. In celebration of the 60th anniversary of this conference, organizers are working hard to make it a truly memorable event.

Under the leadership of conference committee co-chairs Kevin Weinberger and Glenda Dales, many new ideas are being explored to create an event that incorporates valuable learning opportunities within a gala commemorative atmosphere. Stay tuned for more details, but mark your calendar now to attend the conference next summer. If you have any suggestions for the gala event, please contact any of the following committee members:

Kevin Weinberger: (780) 799-8055 or email: kevin.weinberger@woodbuffalo.ab.ca

Glenda Dales: (780) 363-3884 or email: g.dales@telus.net

Ted Bochan: (403) 315-9435 or email: e-max@shaw.ca

New Executive Director announced

President Brian McEvoy and the Board of the AFCA are pleased to announce the appointment of Bill Purdy as Executive Director. Bill brings experience from two levels of government: he served as the MLA for the Stony Plain constituency from 1971-1986; was elected to Council for the Village of Wabamun in 1986, and has served the community in various capacities for the past 20 years.

An active member of the Wabamun Volunteer Fire Department since its start in 1964, Bill has served in a number of positions, including a stint as fire chief from 1976-88. He is currently the Deputy Chief. He was elected to the Board of the AFCA in 1994 as a director at large, which he has recently resigned due to his new position.

Bill can be contacted at bpurdy@interbaun.com, phone: (780) 892-2125 or cell: (780) 719-7939.

Brooks training facility receives rave reviews

A new regional fire training facility located in the City of Brooks was officially opened on Friday, May 5, 2006, in true fire service fashion. Rather than the traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony, dignitaries used the fire department's Jaws of Life to cut a fire hose.

Designed to serve the fire training requirements of fire departments within a 100 kilometre radius of the City of Brooks, the state-of-the-art training facility provides hundreds of firefighters with the most realistic live-fire scenarios possible with the greatest degree of safety.

"Safety training increases hazard awareness and reduces injuries, while at the same increases confidence in properly dealing with hazardous situations," said Kevin Swanson, Fire Chief for the City of Brooks.

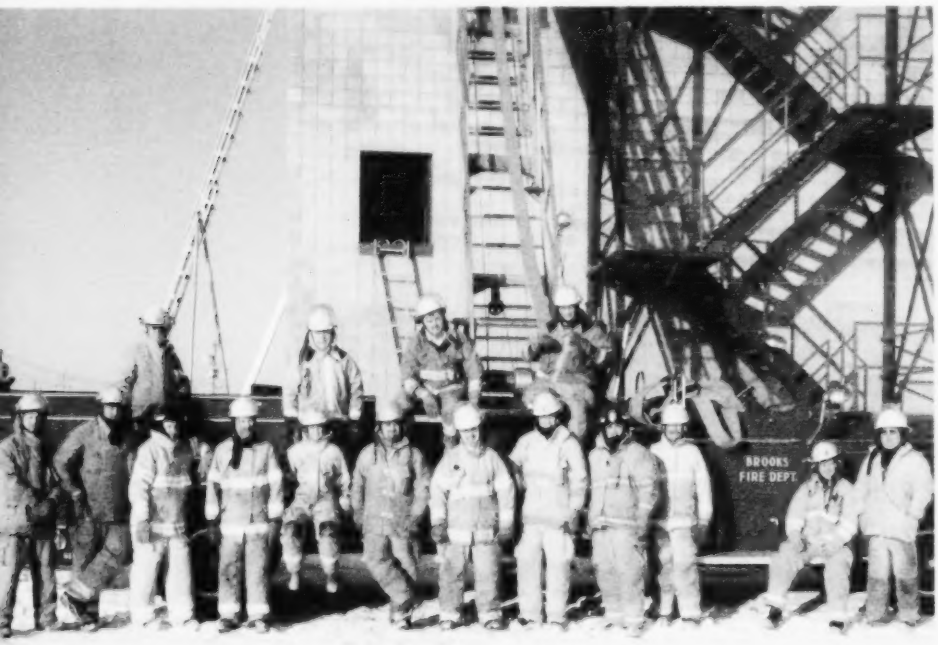
The Brooks Fire Department co-ordinated the construction of the facility in co-operation with the volunteer rural fire departments of Bassano, Bow City, Duchess, Gem, Patricia, Rolling Hills, Rosemary, Scandia and Tilley, communities all within the County of Newell.

The new facility allows these fire departments to create fire and rescue exercises in a safe and controlled environment. The volunteer firefighters have been working hard towards this goal for many years – the dream began about 15 years ago, but only over the past three years has the dream really started to become a reality.

Financing the project

Funding for the Brooks Fire Training Facility was acquired from several sources, as indicated below:

$293,600	Contributions in place (donations raised by volunteer firefighters)
$352,000	Municipal sponsorship grant (County of Newell, Town of Bassano, Village of Duchess and the Town of Brooks)
$31,332	GST rebate
$58,600	Corporate sponsorship
$735,532	**TOTAL REVENUE**



Participants in the first official course taught at the Brooks Regional Fire Training Facility. (Back row L-R): Wally Stewart (Brooks), Joe Yarrow (Brooks), Cody Cage (Duchess), Colin Quinton (Brooks). (Front row L-R): Pat Gibeault (Brooks), Stewart Luchies (Brooks), Chad Skrove (Rolling Hills), Bill Dickinson (Rolling Hills), Ronya Bollhorn (Brooks), Patrick Crickard (Brooks), Dennis Douglas (Irvine), Mark Repetski (Brooks), Tim Calf Robe (Siksika), Keith Martin(Brooks/instructor), Andrew Schalk (Nanton), Kevin Swanson (Brooks/evaluator).

Situated on four acres of prime industrial park land, the four-storey training structure has a 1,200 square foot ground floor, capable of numerous simulations. Its design includes:

- four floors;
- flat and sloped roof access;
- ground floor and basement access;
- internal stairs with various landing and occupancy types;
- live smoke-flame on all levels;
- movable interior walls to easily change the floor plan;
- various lighting conditions; and
- various apparatus accessibility conditions.

The building will be used for a variety of training initiatives such as building collapse, live fire-smoke exercises, pumper operations, search and rescue drills, ladder training, high angle rescue, standpipe and sprinkler training, ventilation drills, salvage and overhaul operations, origin/cause determination (fire investigation) training and fire prevention initiatives, etc.

"The new regional facility is a legacy that everyone can be proud of," said Swanson. "Having a local fire training facility enables our firefighters to greatly improve their training so they can better protect the communities in which they live, work and play."

Those thoughts were echoed by Rob Renner, Minister of Alberta Municipal Affairs, in a letter read out by Fire Safety Officer Ken McMullen. "The opening of this facility is an accomplishment everyone involved can be proud of. On behalf of all Albertans, I commend you for setting a great example and showing other municipalities and fire services what can be achieved through vision, determination and the power of teamwork."

Trainees go through the paces at the brooks Regional Fire Training Facility

Fort Macleod's cancer fundraising efforts

Giving it up for a good cause

The adage, "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again" reflects Fort Macleod Fire Department member Bill Norgard's approach. Two years ago, Norgard suggested that he and his fellow firefighters raise money by shaving their heads to support cancer patients. His efforts didn't get much attention that year, but when he presented the idea again this year, the response was much more enthusiastic.

In addition to Norgard, Fort Macleod Fire Chief Dick Schellhorn, Captains Perry Fraser and John Mackintosh, and firefighters Mike Roy, George Fox, Huub Wooldrik, Warner Dressler and Mark Chmielewski participated in the event. Other Fort Macleod participants included councillors Ken Williams and Brian Reach, lawyer John Dziadyk and nine-year-old Damian Smiley.

When Floyd Provost, Fire Chief for the Peigan Volunteer Fire Department, read about the upcoming event in the local newspaper, he quickly called Schellhorn to see if his fire department could take part too. Together with firefighters Cody Black Eyes and Perry Warrior, Provost and his department raised $1,600 of the over $6,000 raised for the Cancer Society.

Peigan Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief Floyd Provost (left) and Fort Macleod Fire Chief Dick Schellhorn provide each other with moral support during their shave for cancer.

"Everyone knows of a relative or friend who has been touched by cancer. I feel it is a truly worthwhile cause and want to thank all my fellow firefighters who participated in the event and 'gave it up' for those suffering from this disease," said Norgard.

National perspectives on fire service issues

The 2006 Canadian Council of Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners (CCFM-FC) was held July 10-12 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This annual meeting provided an opportunity for fire service representatives from all provinces and territories to come together and share fire protection, prevention and public education issues and programs on a national basis.

Topics discussed this year included improved national collection and co-ordination of fire loss statistics. This includes broadening the scope of collection to better address statistics user needs. Representatives also discussed the activities and programs of the various jurisdictions.

There was also discussion about Nova Scotia's new Fire Act. Of particular interest was that the act includes placing the responsibility for fire code compliance inspections on the local school boards, including mandatory reporting requirements. What makes this really innovative is the fact that the school district operating grants are tied directly to compliance.

Life Safety Educators Forum

One of the major initiatives of the CCFM-FC is the Life Safety Educators Forum. This year's forum was hosted by the Manitoba Fire Commissioner in Winnipeg. Discussion at the forum generated some key recommendations, including:

- the establishment of a national committee responsible to the Public Education Committee of the Council with representatives from each jurisdiction and the Aboriginal community; and,
- that CCFM-FC contact the Canadian Council of Emergency Management Organizers to offer support to mutual communication of fire and emergency preparedness messaging and public education.

...counterfeit products and testing labels is a widespread and rapidly growing problem that police agencies, the CSA and many other agencies are working aggressively on.

A strategic plan is being developed to support the committee's work and will be presented for the Council's consideration at the next annual meeting.

At this same forum, the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) provided an extensive presentation on counterfeit products and testing labels, which is a widespread and rapidly growing problem that police agencies, the CSA and many other agencies are working aggressively on. As many counterfeiting investigations begin as a product failure or fire investigation, the fire investigator should consider notifying the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) or CSA directly when dealing with fire causes involving equipment. Note: More information about this issue will be provided in upcoming issues of *Alberta Fire News*.

Another topic raised at the forum was the issue of volunteer recruitment and retention, which has become a serious problem in the volunteer fire service sector across Canada, not just Alberta. To address this concern, all jurisdictions agreed to share and compare strategies. Ontario Fire Marshall Bernie Moyle presented the issue from an Ontario perspective but much of what he had to say is reflected in Alberta. He estimated that the volunteer fire service is a irreplaceable $2.5 billion asset to Ontario. Recruitment and retention has become a central focus of the Ontario Fire Marshall's fire service support programming. More details about their approach will be provided in upcoming issues of *Alberta Fire News*.

The final session of the forum was a presentation by the lead RCMP investigator on the Swissair Flight 111 disaster. The most interesting part of the presentation was his underestimation of the size and scope of the investigation. What he initially thought would take a few weeks and approximately 50 staff ended up costing taxpayers $100 million and involved over 4,000 investigators around the world. His final comments were:

- be prepared;
- the community is looking for effective collaboration and positive professional discharge of our duties; and,
- teamwork is critical and following a disaster is not the time for egos and empires.

Ernie Polsom, Assistant Fire Commissioner, Operations, represented Alberta at the CCFM-FC annual conference in Halifax.

Alberta Emergency Farm Plan

Helping farm owners prepare for emergencies

A new program has been created by the Alberta Farm Plan Committee (a partnership between Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO), Alberta Environment, and the Environmental Farm Plan Company) to help farm owners prevent emergencies and provide key information for emergency crews responding in the event of an incident.

Modeled after Ontario's Emergency Tube and Farm Contingency Plan, the Alberta Emergency Farm Plan enables farm owners to prepare for two types of emergencies: dangerous goods spills and fires. The project is currently being piloted in the communities of Camrose and Stony Plain.

"We're excited to be one of the pilot communities of this excellent program," said Camrose Fire Department Fire Chief Peter Krich. "Much like we've promoted the family emergency escape plan, we're now extending that focus to farm owners. Hopefully, participation in the plan will create greater awareness about potential hazards and actions that can be taken to prevent them."

The Emergency Farm Plan is based on following seven simple steps:

- sketching farmstead/property or providing an aerial map;
- completing a farm inventory worksheet;
- sketching a map of runoff areas;
- filling out an "In Case of Emergency" worksheet;
- posting the "Emergency Plan for Spills" sheet in areas containing dangerous goods;
- placing the sketches and worksheet in the waterproof emergency tube and mounting the tube on the transformer pole just above the meter box; and,
- updating the information on an annual basis.

"...an Emergency Farm Plan will be of enormous assistance to emergency responders..."

The kit includes stickers to place on the farmstead sketch/photo to identify the locations of all dangerous goods or those that can cause pollution.

"Having farm owners create an Emergency Farm Plan will be of enormous assistance to emergency responders in the event of an emergency incident," said Spence Sample, Acting Fire Commissioner. "In addition to saving lives, it will also help minimize property damage and safeguard the environment."

For more information about the Emergency Farm Plan, please contact:

Laurel Aitken, Farm Safety Coordinator
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
(780) 427-4231

Peter Krich, Fire Chief
Camrose Fire Department
(780) 672-2906

Edmonton Fire Summit 2006

Working together towards greater safety

A one-day summit held on September 11, 2006, in Edmonton brought together more than 100 government and industry representatives to discuss issues related to fire safety in buildings.

Fire Summit 2006 was spearheaded by Edmonton Fire Chief Randy Wolsey to generate discussion about issues around building codes and fire safety. The three key issues discussed during the summit were building separations and fire exposures, height of multi-family dwellings and use of engineered wood products.

In addition to presentations on each of the three issues, attendees also took part in small, in-depth group discussions.

"Our goal was to bring a diverse group of people involved with fire safety together to find resolutions to these issues and work toward implementing changes before the next building code cycle," said Wolsey. "Based on the number of participants and their involvement in discussions, it was a great success."

Wolsey says the next step is to put together a report based on the discussions, which will be shared with key government officials.

Fire losses in buildings under construction in Alberta: Five-year review (2000-04)

Construction is a feature of daily life as the province of Alberta continues to grow and expand, especially in the cities. Houses, office buildings, hospitals and schools make up the majority of this construction. Alberta had the highest growth rate in the number of dwellings authorized from 1994 to 2004. The number of residential building permits grew 116 per cent, from 18,000 in 1994 to just under 39,000 in 2004. This growth was spurred largely by home building in Calgary and Edmonton and by the oil and gas industry boom that has drawn more people to the province.

Fire poses the greatest risk of sudden catastrophic loss during construction activities in new or existing buildings. Just one example is the 2002 Erlton fire in Calgary in which a condominium complex containing four buildings was heavily damaged by a fire that started in one of the four buildings still under construction at the time. Fire spread to the three occupied buildings and other properties, destroying the entire complex at an estimated cost of $66 million in direct property damage.

Fire losses in buildings under construction

There were 160 fires recorded in the Fire Statistics Information System at the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) for the five-year period 2000-04. These fires caused no deaths but injured 15 people and damaged property to the tune of $37.9 million. The key findings of an analysis of these fires are presented below.

One per cent of reported structure fires occurred in buildings under construction: During the five-year period in review, fires in buildings under construction accounted for one per cent of the 16,074 structure fires, 0.9 per cent of the 1,654 fire injuries and 3.1 per cent of the $1.2 billion in direct property damage.

Seventy-eight per cent of these fires were in buildings intended for residential use: In 124 of the 160 cases (78 per cent), major occupancy was categorized as "residential use." These fires also accounted for 13 out of 15 fire injuries and $37.6 million out of $37.9 million in direct property damage.

Fire poses the greatest risk of sudden catastrophic loss during construction activities in new or existing buildings.

Seventy-two per cent of these fires occurred in Edmonton and Calgary: Fires in Edmonton accounted for 41 per cent of total fires, four out of 15 injuries and $9 million (24 per cent) of direct property damage in all fires in buildings under construction. Fires in Calgary accounted for 31 per cent of total fires, seven out of 15 fire injuries and $24 million (63 per cent) of direct property damage in all fires in buildings under construction.

Arson was the leading cause of these fires: Of the 160 fires, arson accounted for 32.5 per cent and $18.3 million (48 per cent) of direct property damage. Other common acts or omissions were combustibles placed too close (11 per cent of fires and 0.5 per cent of property losses); mechanical malfunction, part failure, leak/break (nine per cent and three per cent); and welding or cutting too close (six per cent and 33 per cent).

Common sources of ignition: portable space heaters and exposure from detached structure fires: Of the known sources of ignition, portable space heaters ranked the highest, causing 17 per cent of the fires and two per cent of direct property damage. This was followed by exposure from detached structure fires (13 per cent of the total accounting for two per cent of property losses); matches/lighters (13 per cent of the total and 29 per cent of property losses); and cutting torch, torch other than cutting/welding and welding equipment (eight per cent of fires, 33 per cent property losses).

Most common material first ignited was the exterior wall cover: Of the known materials ignited first, exterior wall cover was the most common at 13 per cent of fires, causing 34 per cent of property losses. This was followed by building components (wall, floor, ceiling, roof) accounting for nine per cent of fires and six per cent of property losses; wood/wooden items, wood shavings and wood products (eight per cent of fires, one per cent of property losses); propane/natural gas/other flammable gases (six per cent of fires, three per cent of property losses); cardboard, cardboard items (five per cent of fires, 28 per cent

of property losses) and roof covering (three per cent of fires, 0.5 per cent of property losses).

Fires originated most frequently in the exterior wall area: Most fires in buildings under construction started in the area of exterior wall (18 per cent of fires and $0.9 million or 2.5 per cent of property losses). Other common areas of fire origin were unclassified structural areas (10 per cent of fires and 3.4 per cent of property losses); garage for vehicles (seven per cent of fires and 3.4 per cent of property losses); and the exterior roof (five per cent of fires and four per cent of property losses).

Most fires started between midnight and 4 a.m.: The majority of fires in buildings under construction started between the hours of midnight to 4 a.m. These fires were also responsible for the largest percentage of property losses (52 per cent).

Dwellings under construction: According to a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation report released in April 2006, a total of 97,356 dwellings were under construction in Alberta during the five-year period 2000-04. If the definition for dwellings under construction in this report corresponds to the residential category of buildings under construction as recorded in the Fire Statistics Information System at the FCO, then the incidence of these fires are 124, or 0.13 per cent of the total dwelling stock under construction.

Conclusions

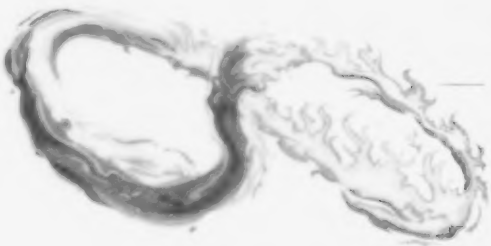
The largest concentrations of fires in buildings under construction were in Edmonton and Calgary and in the residential category, indicating the recent increased growth in the construction sector. The leading cause of these fires was intentional, which agrees with findings reported by the National Fire Protection Association (Marty Ahrens, 2003, *Leading causes and other patterns and trends – properties that are vacant, under construction, renovation or demolition).* Sources of ignition that led to fires causing the most damage were cutting torch, torch other than cutting/welding and welding equipment.

This paper with detailed data tables is posted on the FCO website under "Statistics Reports" at: www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco_index.htm

Report prepared by Mahendra Wijayasinghe, Assistant Fire Commissioner, Research & Programs. Phone: (780) 415-0546 or e-mail at mahendra.wijayasinghe@gov.ab.ca

fire etc. update

Emergency preparedness courses now online



Three of **fire etc.**'s emergency preparedness courses may now be taken online.

Basic Emergency Management is an introduction to theory and operations of handling emergency situations. Through case studies, participants learn how to apply the principles of disaster management. *Introduction to Incident Command System 100* and *Introduction to Incident Command System 200* are first and second level training in the Incident Command System (ICS). The concepts presented in the introductory courses are expanded and applied during practical exercises in the second level.

While all three of the courses were previously available in a correspondence format, providing them online is a convenient and cost-effective training method. The two introductory courses are $30 each and the ICS 200 course is $50.

To take the courses online, it's recommended you have a Pentium 3 (or better) PC with 64 MB of RAM (or better) running Windows 95 or better and using either Microsoft Internet Explore 5.0 or Netscape 6.1 or higher as a web browser.

To register for any of the three courses contact Distance Learning via e-mail at dlearn@fire-etc.ca or call toll-free 1-888-863-2387 for a correspondence application form.

2007 calendar available

The 88 page calendar with all of **fire etc.**'s 2007 offerings, along with course descriptions, is available both in hard copy and online. For the online version go to www.fire-etc.ca

Learn the ropes!

The basics of rescue and the specifics of rope rescue are the newest additions to NFPA courses available through **fire etc.**

Co-developed and presented by **fire etc.** and Firemaster Oil Services Inc. of Red Deer, NFPA 1006 will be of interest to municipal fire departments, industrial emergency teams, search and rescue personnel, wilderness rescue teams, police departments, mine rescue teams and the military, as well as recreational climbers and cavers.

Students must successfully complete both courses, and possess an emergency medical responder certificate (or its equivalent) to be eligible for certification.

News and events in Alberta's Aboriginal communities

In communities throughout Alberta, the message of fire prevention and safety is being spread. Provided below are a few examples of different approaches to improving safety in Aboriginal communities.

Smoke alarm program successful

In partnership with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) "First Nations Remembering When" program, the Fire Commissioner's Office has just completed a smoke alarm installation pilot project in all five reserves of the Yellowhead Tribal Council: the O'Chiese, Sunchild, Enoch, Alexander and Alexis reserves.

Thanks to the efforts of Daniel Kootenay from the Yellowhead Tribal Council, with guidance from Judy Harvie from the FCO, more than 500 smoke alarms were installed in homes for the elderly and others with a higher risk of fire. In addition to the installations, the program educates homeowners on escape plans and fire and fall prevention.

"This very successful program was well received by everyone in the community and presentations on fire and injury prevention continue to be provided to the elders and resident members of the Yellowhead Tribal Council," commented Harvie.

Participants of the 2006 Métis Settlement Youth Conference.

Edson donates fire truck

The East Prairie Métis Settlement received a very big gift from the Edson Fire Department in September Edson Fire Chief Alan Schram presented the East Prairie Administrator and fire department with a 1975 pumper truck equipped with bunker gear, ladders, hard suction drafting hose and portable water tanks. In appreciation of the gift, the settlement named their new vehicle "Fred" in honour of Fred Iwanciwski, a long serving captain with the Edson Fire Department. Edson is the first fire department in Alberta to donate a fire truck to another community through the FCO.

Edson Fire Department Chief Alan Schram and the FCO's Judy Harvie with members of the East Prairie Fire Department celebrating the arrival of the donated fire truck.

Training program produces two more graduates

An update to a story that ran in the August issue of *Alberta Fire News*... Dave Jensen and Perry Cornish successfully completed their training program with the City of Edmonton Fire and Rescue and are now actively pursuing full-time employment as firefighters.

Spreading the word at the 2006 youth conference

The 2006 Annual Métis Settlement Youth Conference held at Elizabeth Lake attracted about 80 teens and pre-teens. Serving as the role model for the young audience, Judy Harvey, the FCO's Aboriginal Liaison Officer, introduced careers in the fire service. Thanks go out to Edmonton Fire Rescue Services for participating in the conference and showcasing firefighting as a possible career choice.

Taking part in fire prevention week

All Aboriginal fire chiefs across Alberta were invited to take part in the 2006 Fire Prevention Week kickoff organized by the Fire Commissioner's Office. Working in partnership with Edmonton Fire Rescue Services and ATCO Gas, the ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen cooking fire demonstration stressed the importance of safety when cooking. Note: See next page for a more in-depth article about the FPW kickoff.

Blue Flame Kitchen accentuates the message

The 2006 Fire Prevention Week kickoff on Thursday, October 5 was a blazing affair to make Albertans aware of this year's theme – *Prevent Cooking Fires: Watch What You Heat*. Held at the ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen in Edmonton, the kickoff included a demonstration of what happens when cooking fires occur. Since cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires in Alberta and are a leading cause of fire injuries and deaths in the province, this year's event provided a visual illustration of some of the dangers that can be found in the kitchen.

This year's event was a joint initiative of the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO), Edmonton Fire Rescue Services and ATCO Gas and ATCO Electric. Tim Vanderbrink of Edmonton Fire Rescue Services served as the Master of Ceremonies.

Tim Vanderbrink of Edmonton Fire Rescue Services demonstrates safe cooking techniques at the ATCO Blue Flame kitchen as part of the kickoff for Fire Prevention Week 2006.

As Acting Fire Commissioner Spence Sample said in his speech, "The province is committed to providing fire prevention and safety education to Albertans and to supporting events such as this one." His comment was supported by comments from ATCO Gas President Jerome Engler. "Because safety is our first priority, we place great value on our excellent working relationships with fire departments across Alberta," said Engler.

In fact, ATCO Gas plays an important "behind the scenes" role when emergencies occur. When called to a fire, their employees see firsthand the risks and dangers that firefighters face on a regular basis. About 40 ATCO Gas and ATCO Electric employees serve on many of Alberta's volunteer fire departments and ATCO supports them in that work.

This is the second year that ATCO Gas and ATCO Electric have helped promote Fire Prevention Week. In addition to participating in the kickoff event, ATCO Gas and ATCO Electric sponsored the Fire Prevention Week children's program that allows fire departments across Alberta to partner with elementary schools and other community organizations to deliver safety education to children and their families.

ATCO has recently agreed to sponsor the Fire Prevention Week children's program for the next 10 years, further broadening ATCO's commitment to keeping Alberta communities safe.

Monitoring the health of firefighters

Magic Pill for Firefighters?

A researcher at the University of Victoria is claiming that a tiny transmitter, about the size of a vitamin pill, that can be swallowed by firefighters can help save them from heart attacks, which is one of the leading causes of firefighter fatalities.

Lynneth Wolski, an occupational physiologist, said the combination of heat stress from temperatures of up to 200 degrees centigrade, the recurrence of wearing heavy-duty protective gear and the stress of the occupation puts firefighters at a high risk of heart attacks. When swallowed, the tiny transmitter allows firefighters' core body temperature to be monitored so they can be pulled from a blaze or any high-stress rescue if their temperature is dangerously high.

The transmitter, which has been on the market for about a year-and-a-half in the United States, was approved in January by Health Canada.

It works by sending out a radio signal of a firefighter's core body temperature via a monitor worn on the chest. Another monitor also picks up heart and blood pressure rates to give a full picture of how much strain firefighters are enduring. "All of a sudden they're just too overloaded and if they're susceptible, if they've got hidden coronary heart disease or whatever else, that's it, they're done."

Statistics from the U.S.-based National Fire Protection Association indicate that over 50 per cent of firefighters die of heart attacks. "When they take a look at those deaths, they attribute about 85 to 90 per cent of them to thermal stress and the physical demands of [the work]," she said.

Wolski said the transmitter would be especially beneficial for firefighters who rescue trapped motorists, which is considered even more stressful than entering burning buildings.

— Source: *Canadian Press*

Upcoming public fire education campaign

Burn Awareness Week 2007

The 2007 Burn Awareness Week campaign will take place February 4-10, 2007. For the campaign, the FCO will provide a Burn Awareness Week campaign kit, which will address burn issues for high-risk groups such as children and seniors. Topics will include burn knowledge, causes of burns, first aid and education and awareness on burn prevention. The kit will be available February 1, 2007.

The campaign kit will be posted on the FCO website at: www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco_index.htm under "campaigns."

For more information or for hard copies of the material, please contact Te-Jay Thompson at the Fire Commissioner's Office at (780) 644-4692 or e-mail te-jay.thompson@gov.ab.ca.

Safeguarding the environment

New support and emergency response team created

Given the ecological, economic, recreational and social benefits of Alberta's beauty, it is no surprise that Albertans want and expect a safe and efficient supply of water, clean air and productive land. However, recent significant environmental incidents such as the 2005 Lake Wabamun spill and major flooding in southern Alberta illustrate the need for careful management of our environment. In support of these concerns, Alberta Environment has recently created an environmental Support and Emergency Response Team (ASERT).

"The Alberta Environment Support and Emergency Team was developed in response to recommendations put forth by the Environmental Protection Commission," said Al Montpellier, ERU Manager, Environmental Emergency Response Team, Alberta Environment. "Our mandate is to establish a centre of excellence in environmental emergency response and planning in Alberta. The team will be accountable for the overall outcomes of the province's environmental emergency response and will act as the central unit to facilitate and support department-wide environmental emergency planning and response capabilities."

The key functions of the team include:

- **response equipment and resources** – including compiling and maintaining an inventory of current response equipment available in and outside the province as well as a contact list of experts and consultants;
- **environmental incident support and advice** – providing onsite and remote report support and advice on response, recovery and remediation techniques;
- **outreach and education** – in addition to enhancing partnerships with federal agencies involved in emergency response, promoting capabilities to the public, industry and other agencies;
- **training** – training team members in leading-edge response techniques for a broad range of specific situations and training other responders about environmental response management;
- **identification of knowledge gaps** – participating in post-incident assessments to address any knowledge gaps; and,
- **risk management** – identifying high-risk areas and developing strategies to deal with the risks.

Our mandate is to establish a centre of excellence in environmental emergency response and planning in Alberta.

"We do not see the team as a stand-alone unit. Rather, we will work together with our network of regional staff and with organizations such as Emergency Management Alberta, other government departments and environmental partners to effectively manage the consequences or crisis of a provincial environmental emergency or disaster," said Montpellier.

For more information about ASERT, please contact Al Montpellier at (780) 425-0989. Dial 310-0000 for toll-free access. The team can also be contacted toll-free through Alberta Environment's 24 hour call centre at 1-800-222-6514.

Friendly competition showcases professionalism and prowess

And the winners are:

1st place: Sundre Fire Department

2nd place: Red Deer County Fire Department

3rd place: Torrington Fire Department

4th place: Lacombe Fire Department

This year's annual Fire Power competition was held at the Westerner Days celebration in Red Deer on July 22, 2006. Leading off the event was a media challenge where local media stars got the opportunity to don firefighter's clothing, drag a hose and move a victim.

The Fire Power competition is an opportunity for volunteer firefighters to demonstrate their professionalism and firefighter training prowess in front of each other and the public. All evaluations used in the competition are based on internationally-recognized best practices and standards. Scoring is based on a combination of time, accuracy and safe work practices. This year, 14 teams from across Alberta participated in the competition. A great time was had by all, and kudos to everyone who participated.

A crowd intently watches firefighters participate in the 2006 Fire Power competition in Red Deer on July 22.

Creating greater awareness about cyanide poisoning

— Sources: IAFC ON Scene, May 15, 2006 and www.cyanidepoisoning.org

Recent incidents (see sidebar) illustrate the need for more knowledge about cyanide poisoning, an issue that is being resolved through the recently established Cyanide Poisoning Treatment Coalition (CPTC) in the United States.

A non-profit organization to encourage a rational approach to cyanide poisoning diagnosis and treatment, the CPTC is comprised of organizations, such as the International Association of Fire Chiefs, whose members have direct involvement with the identification and treatment of cyanide exposure.

According to CPTC President Donald Walsh, PhD, EMT-P, International Emergency Medicine Disaster Specialist and a chief officer with the Chicago Fire Department, "As the Rhode Island incidents indicate, one of the most common ways the general public may be affected by cyanide poisoning is through smoke inhalation from structure fires."

Risk of cyanide poisoning

One of Rhode Island's worst fires was the February 20, 2003, fire that broke out just after 11 p.m. at The Station nightclub in West Warwick, Rhode Island, which resulted in 100 deaths. According to an NIST investigation, which included experiments simulating the fire, concentrations of carbon monoxide and hydrogen cyanide soared and oxygen levels plummeted within seconds of the fire's ignition.

A month later on March 23 and 24, 28 firefighters who responded to three business and house fires were admitted to hospital with headaches, dizziness and incoherence. When tested for cyanide poisoning, eight had elevated levels of cyanide in their blood and two others required an antidote. Two months after these fires, a five-member task force was created by Providence, Rhode Island Fire Chief David Costas and Mayor David Cicilline. A press release issued May 30, 2006, by the City of Providence stated that "the task force issued more than a dozen recommendations to limit the risk of cyanide poisoning in the future." A copy of the press release is available at: www.providenceri.com/press/article.php?id=104

...the CPTC has developed a very informative website (www.cyanidepoisoning.org) providing comprehensive information about cyanide, signs and symptoms of cyanide poisoning and treatment.

To help educate people about cyanide poisoning, the CPTC has developed a very informative website providing comprehensive information about cyanide, signs and symptoms of cyanide poisoning, and treatment. The website also includes separate sections on cyanide and fire, cyanide and industry and cyanide and terrorism.

As stated on the CPTC website: "At the scene of a fire, cyanide poisoning should be suspected in any person exposed to smoke in a closed space regardless of whether burns have been sustained. Soot in the mouth and around the nose, combined with an altered level of consciousness, also suggest a high probability of cyanide toxicity. Scientific study has helped identify a "Cyanide Toxidrome" which includes altered mental status with mydriasis, low respiratory rate, low systolic blood pressure with increased heart rate and metabolic acidosis with a large increase in plasma lactate.

For more information about cyanide poisoning, please visit the CPTC's website at www.cyanidepoisoning.org

Livestock rescue expertise available for first responders

If livestock are transported through your fire department's jurisdiction, you would be wise to learn more about Jennifer Woods. As an independent livestock handling specialist, Woods is acutely aware of livestock emergency response protocol.

Since 1997, Woods has worked closely with Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) to develop and deliver the world's only emergency training program that deals with traffic collisions involving large commercial livestock transporters. Woods provides instruction for emergency response services, companies, fire departments, brand inspectors and others involved in the livestock industry across North America. Trained and certified in Large Animal Rescue, Woods has extensive experience with cattle, horses, sheep, pigs, elk and bison and has been assisting on accident scenes since 1998.

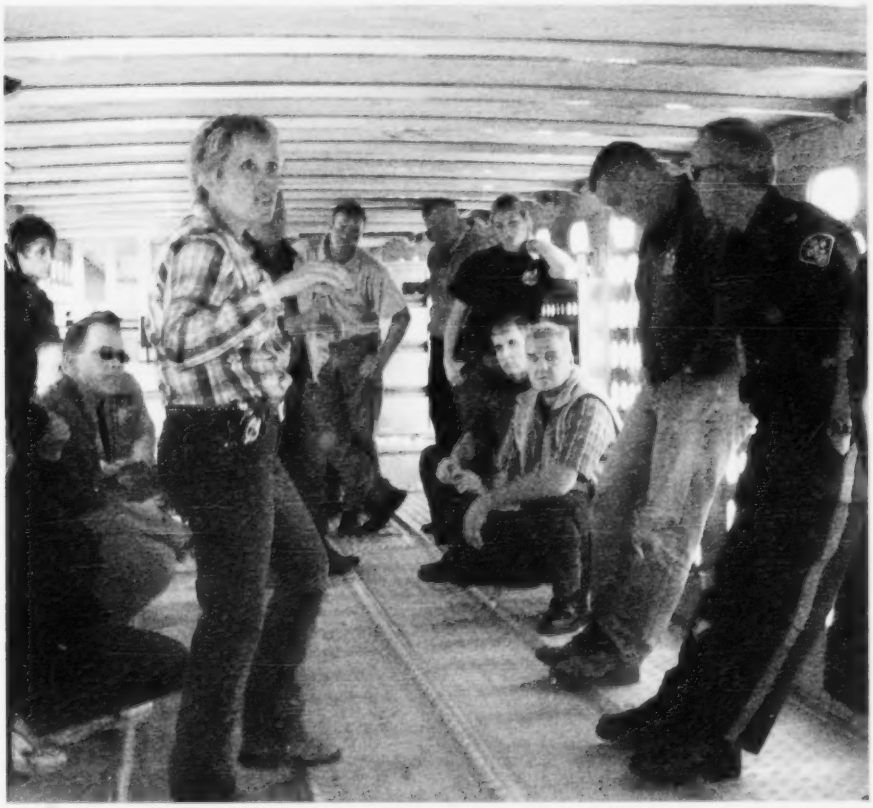
Woods' credentials include a Bachelor of Science degree in animal science from Colorado State University in 1992. In 2006, Woods received the Award of Distinction and Innovation from the AFAC for her Livestock Emergency Response Program, Canada's first training program to assist first responders and livestock haulers with livestock related accidents.

The remains of a livestock trailer following a collision.

She was also instrumental in working with the AFAC, Hartford Insurance and Canadian Farm Insurance to establish the Livestock Emergency Response (LER) hotline in Alberta.

"When emergency responders, livestock haulers or producers call the hotline, I can assist the callers with locating resources or dispatching trained personnel to the accident location," Woods pointed out. In addition to accidents, the hotline can also be used to assist with horse or small stock trailer accidents and barn fires. "Basically, if it involves livestock, the hotline can help."

According to Woods, the most urgent problem with accidents involving livestock is the lack of knowledge and experience of those first on the scene in dealing with livestock incident response/rescue and the handling of stressed stock. "Because animals can be extremely unpredictable in such a situation, they need to be handled in a manner similar to hazardous materials," added Woods. "Each species reacts differently and no first responders should ever enter a capsized trailer with animals inside."



Livestock handling specialist Jennifer Woods holding a workshop.

For more information about responding to a livestock incident or courses that Woods conducts, please visit her website at www.reflectedlivestock.com To reach the Livestock Emergency Response hotline, call toll-free 1-866-684-3028.

Peigan volunteers make inroads in fire safety

Despite undergoing a "baptism by fire" when he became fire chief of the Peigan Volunteer Fire Department in 1988, Fire Chief Floyd Provost is proud to lead a team of volunteer firefighters that are making inroads in fire prevention and safety.

Serving a population of 2,300 on the Piikani Nation in the Brocket area of southern Alberta, Provost's fire department is comprised entirely of volunteers – Provost as fire chief plus 17 male and two female volunteer firefighters. The First Nations jurisdiction covers 112,656 acres.

The fire department is housed in a two-bay garage, which includes a triple pumper unit and a quick attack unit. Other equipment used for water supply and grass suppression includes a 2000 Freightliner and a 2002 Sterling, both of which come with a 100-barrel water tank, a three-inch Bowie discharge pump and a spray bar. In addition to the department's 10 units of self-contained breathing apparatus equipment, all firefighters have bunker gear and hand-held radios.

Peigan Volunteer Fire Department members practicing fire-suppression tactics.

...Fire Chief Floyd Provost is always looking for opportunities to increase education and awareness in his community.

"All of our firefighters are trained to at least Level 1, and most have received additional training in different areas, which provides a well-rounded service for our community," noted Provost. Five of the firefighters are also trained as pump operators, including foam application; two are trained as fire investigators; one is trained in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing; five are trained in ice rescue; two members are trained in vehicle extrication; two serve as firefighter trainers; and one serves as the Fire Prevention Officer.

Provost works full time in the safety area of the Shell Gas Plant in Pincher Creek, but is always looking for opportunities to increase education and awareness in his community. "We give homeowners the opportunity to have their residence undergo a safety inspection by our firefighters. We also hold ongoing fire prevention and education workshops," added Provost. Members have conducted workshops at the Piikani Elementary School as well as at junior, senior, upgrading and Life Skills Program classes.

The fire department also does a yearly workshop with the babysitter's course that is run by the Piikani Child & Family Services and Community Health Centre. As well, the fire department co-ordinates Fire Prevention Week activities and gives out 10-pound fire extinguishers as prizes for various draw events.

"Overall, our fire education and prevention programs have reduced the number of fire calls to 10 emergency calls in 2005, and no false alarms. Best of all, we had only one fire-related injury reported in 2005," stated Provost.

Digest

FIPEN survey – thanks for the input!

Thanks to everyone who completed the *Survey of Current Practices in Fire & Injury Prevention Education in Alberta* that was sent to all fire departments across the province. As of Oct. 20, 175 surveys were received.

The responses are being recorded in a data base at the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research. The analyzed responses will be put into a report that will be included in the next issue of *Alberta Fire News*. The FCO and the Steering Committee of the Fire and Injury Prevention Educators' Network appreciate the efforts of everyone who took the time to complete the survey.

Increased rate for emergency response on highways

In case you haven't heard, Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation's policy statement for fire calls on highways was updated in February 2006. For authorized calls, the department will accept billings from local fire departments to cover calls up to $400 per unit per hour (emergency response units are classified as tanker trucks, pumper units, rescue units, command units and rapid response units). These rates are inclusive of manpower. The cost to replenish material expended will be accepted for reimbursement, if copies of invoices detailing these expenditures are included.

The fire department must submit a completed "Fire Call and Rescue Information Sheet" to the Operations Manager of the department's regional office within 120 days of the incident. RCMP collision report forms are available from Transportation Safety Services.

Hose coupling tradition continues

Ronda Bedard, daughter of the late Murray Bedard, participating in the 49th annual Hose Coupling Provincials

The 2006 Hose Coupling Contest held in July at the Westlock Curling Club featured 12 teams of firefighters and non-firefighters from across Alberta. The eight firefighter teams included Westlock (junior and senior squads), Vegreville, Olds, Myrnam, Picture Butte, Barrhead and Stony Plain. One of the non-firefighter teams was the Bedard family, headed by Ronda Bedard, daughter of the late Murray Bedard, former Deputy Fire Commissioner whose name has been immortalized in the contest's prize – the Murray Bedard Memorial Trophy. This year's winners were:

1st place – Picture Butte
2nd place – Vegreville
3rd place – Westlock Senior Squad

FCO website info expanded

More and more information is being added to the website of the Fire Commissioner's Office to assist the fire service and the public with information related to fire prevention, safety education and the fire service.

For example, there is now an Occupational Health and Safety update on the website and there is also a new *milenet* section included under Stats Reporting. Check it out now at www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco_index.htm

In memoriam

It is with much regret that we announced the death of the following members of the fire service in the past few months.

- Former (retired) Brooks Fire Chief Gordon Wilson passed away Sept. 5, 2006, at the age of 72. Wilson was Fire Chief with the Town of Brooks from 1973 to 1990 and had a total of 40 years of active fire service in Canada. During his time as fire chief he was very active in the AFCA executive, holding the position of president for two years. He is survived by his wife June, three children and numerous grandchildren.
- James Kenneth Glegloff (Jim) passed away on July 17, 2006. Jim was a firefighter with Edmonton Fire Rescue.

Centennial celebrations

Two Alberta fire departments commemorated important milestone years of community service in September.

The High River Fire Department celebrated 100 years of volunteer firefighters in the community with its Set the Night on Fire gala on Sept. 16. The evening commemorated past and present volunteer firefighters.

Fort Saskatchewan also marked a century of service with a gala dinner on Sept. 2. The department gave a nod to its history by putting plans in motion to restore the department's first motorized fire engine, a 1929 Model A Ford Bickle pumper truck that the department employed until the mid-1950s. The department is attempting to raise between $100,000 and $125,000 to have the truck shipped to Ontario for a full restoration. Once complete, the truck will serve as a living museum to educate school children about what life was like in the past for firefighters.

Send in your comments

We continue to encourage input for this publication. If you know of an event or issue that is taking place, have story ideas we should include or questions for Ask the Expert, please send them to Te-Jay Thompson at te-jay.thompson@gov.ab.ca

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An object lesson in Christmas tree safety

A few years ago, Vauxhall firefighter Chuck Pozzo learned first-hand just how quickly a Christmas tree can become an extreme hazard. The tree he put up four days before Christmas was looking extremely dry by Boxing Day. Nervous about its condition, Chuck took the tree outside and decided to burn it. He lit the bottom of the tree with only one match and within about 30 seconds the tree ignited completely, as shown in the photos below.

"It was a ranging inferno, and my family, who were inside the house had to back away from the window because the heat was so intense." While Chuck continues to use a live tree each Christmas, he says that he very carefully checks to make sure that the tree he chooses is in a very healthy condition and is kept well watered while the tree is in his home.

5 seconds

15 seconds

25 seconds

30 seconds

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